

Raleigh Radiology is requesting that the State Health Coordinating Council modifies the Proposed 2026 *State Medical Facilities Plan (2026 SMFP)* to include a **special need for one additional fixed MRI scanner in Wake County**. This adjustment would apply to Chapter 15 of the SMFP, and eligibility would be restricted to applicants who provided fixed MRI services in 2024 through legacy service agreements that were terminated effective 2025 and would be assigned to the first CON batch in January 2026.

- Raleigh Radiology currently offers MRI services at 9 of our locations in Wake County. Currently, Akumin operates 6 of those MRIs, including one at our Blue Ridge facility. Akumin owns both the magnet and the CON at each of those 6 locations, meaning Raleigh Radiology cannot offer MRI services at those locations without them. Two of the 6 MRIs are fixed within the Raleigh Radiology facility, while the other 4 are mobile units.
- In early 2025, Akumin pulled 9 days per week of mobile service across several sites, totaling 90 hours per week. Raleigh Radiology ensured patients were taken care of by rescheduling these patients to other sites – although this certainly did impact our operations, we were able to adjust quickly. We’ve since expanded hours to include evenings and weekends at some of our own MRI locations to help ensure patients are cared for in a timely manner.
- We have now received notification that Akumin will terminate services at Blue Ridge effective November of 2025. Because Akumin owns the CON and the mobile fixed magnet, the existing equipment in the building will become dormant and Raleigh Radiology will no longer be able to offer services for MRI at Blue Ridge if nothing changes. The nearly 8,000 patients we anticipate serving between the end of 2025 and through 2026 will be left to find alternative options. At this time, we believe Akumin intends to move the CON outside of Wake County.
- This could be you, or one of your family members or friends. A woman recently diagnosed with breast cancer requires preoperative breast MRI to assess the full extent of disease. She’ll also need annual MRI follow-ups due to dense breast tissue and family history. Without a local MRI, she faces long drives and scheduling delays at overburdened facilities, jeopardizing surgical planning and ongoing surveillance. A young boy with autism and seizures is undergoing workup for possible structural brain abnormalities. MRI is essential to evaluate causes and inform treatment. His single mother can't afford to take off work and drive two hours for imaging. Without a timely scan, care coordination is halted and therapy is delayed. A young mother, who has unexplained back pain – her provider needs to send her for an MRI to know whether it’s a slipped disc or pinched nerve. Without these scans and insight into the reason behind the pain, these patients won’t get the care they need.

- Unfortunately, it is not only the patients who will be impacted. Nearly 950 referring providers have trusted Blue Ridge for their patients' MRI exams to date this year. They rely on Raleigh Radiology to deliver high-value care that supports decisions in each patient's healthcare journey. Without Raleigh Radiology at Blue Ridge, these patients would need to be absorbed into an already overburdened outpatient MRI system, further straining its limited capacity.
- The one MRI allocated in the 2026 SMFP is not sufficient to ensure proper patient care in Wake County next year. The Agency assumed the "fixed" magnet inside Blue Ridge would remain in use, which we now know is not the case. The batch for the 2026 MRI does not open until July, which is too late to assist with the issue at Blue Ridge. Beginning November 21, 2026, Wake County will no longer require a CON for MRI scanners, as CON review for new MRI equipment in counties over 125,000 people will be eliminated. Therefore, it is crucial that the batch for this CON opens in January to decrease the gap in service for Wake County residents.
- Once again, we are asking you to modify the Proposed 2026 SMFP to include a special need for one additional fixed MRI scanner in Wake County and assign it to the first batch in January of 2026 due to this unforeseen circumstance.
- Thank you for your time and attention, I will now answer any of your questions.